

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A playback apparatus comprising:

setting means for setting portions to be partially played back in each content of a group of contents on the basis of a predetermined cut-out pattern in which at least a playback time is set;

selection means for selecting a piece of content in sequence from said group of contents; and

playback means for sequentially playing back said portions to be partially played back which are set in the selected content.

2. A playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein playback is performed in such a way that a predetermined sound effect is interposed between said portions to be partially played back.

3. A playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein playback is performed in such a way that one sound effect is selected by an random selection from a plurality of sound effects for each section between said portions to be partially played back and that the selected sound effect is interposed between said portions to be partially played back.

4. A playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said playback time is randomly varied for each of said contents on the basis of a predetermined reference time.

5. A playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable.

6. A playback apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and said sound effects are switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

7. A playback apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and the connection between said sound effect and said cut-out portion is switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

8. A playback apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and said plurality of sound effects is switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

9. A playback apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and the connection between said sound effect and said cut-out portion is switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

10. A playback apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the cut-out pattern is selectable, and said portion to be partially played back is played back based on a sound effect in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

11. A playback method comprising the steps of:
setting portions to be partially played back in each content of a group of contents on the basis of a predetermined cut-out pattern in which at least a playback time is set;

selecting a piece of content in sequence from said group of contents; and

sequentially playing back said portions to be partially played back which are set in the selected content.

12. A playback method according to Claim 11, wherein playback is performed in such a way that a predetermined sound effect is interposed between said portions to be partially played back.

13. A playback method according to Claim 11, wherein playback is performed in such a way that one sound effect is selected by a random selection from a plurality of sound effects for each section between said portions to be

partially played back and that the selected sound effect is interposed between said portions to be partially played back.

14. A playback method according to Claim 11, wherein said playback time is irregularly varied for each of said contents on the basis of a predetermined reference time.

15. A playback method according to Claim 11, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable.

16. A playback method according to Claim 12, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and said sound effects are switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

17. A playback method according to Claim 12, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and the connection between said sound effect and said cut-out portion is switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

18. A playback method according to Claim 13, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and said plurality of sound effects is switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

19. A playback method according to Claim 13, wherein

said cut-out pattern is selectable, and the connection between said sound effect and said cut-out portion is switched in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

20. A playback method according to Claim 11, wherein said cut-out pattern is selectable, and said portions to be partially played back are played back based on the effect in accordance with said cut-out pattern.

21. A recording medium on which a playback procedure of playing back grouped contents is recorded, said playback procedure comprising the steps of:

setting portions to be partially played back in each content of a group of contents on the basis of a predetermined cut-out pattern in which at least a playback time is set;

selecting a piece of content in sequence from said group of contents; and

sequentially playing back said portions to be partially played back which are set in the selected content.

22. A recording medium according to Claim 21, said playback procedure further comprising the step of performing playback in such a way that a predetermined sound effect is interposed between said portions to be partially played back.

23. A recording medium according to Claim 21, said playback procedure further comprising the step of performing playback in such a way that one sound effect based on a random selection is selected from a plurality of sound effects for each section between said portions to be partially played back and that the selected sound effect is interposed between said portions to be partially played back.

24. A recording medium according to Claim 21, said playback procedure further comprising the step of irregularly varying said playback time for each of said contents on the basis of a predetermined reference time.

25. A playback apparatus for playing back various contents in response to an operation on a display screen, said playback apparatus comprising:

first switching means for switching the operating conditions of a processing system which processes at least said contents in response to an operation of a predetermined operation element; and

second switching means for switching the design of said display screen in response to the switching.

26. A playback apparatus according to Claim 25,

wherein, in response to the operation of said operation element, a corresponding list is selected from a plurality of lists for setting the operating conditions of said processing system, and the operating conditions of said processing system which processes said contents are switched in accordance with the selected list.

27. A playback method for playing back various contents in response to an operation on a display screen, said playback method comprising the steps of:

switching the operating conditions of a processing system which processes at least said contents in response to an operation of a predetermined operation element; and

switching the design of said display screen in response to the switching.

28. A playback method according to Claim 27, wherein, in response to an operation of said operation element, a corresponding list is selected from a plurality of lists for setting the operating conditions of said processing system, and the operating conditions of said processing system which processes said contents are switched in accordance with the selected list.

29. A recording medium on which a playback procedure

for playing back various contents in response to an operation on a display screen is recorded, said playback procedure comprising the steps of:

switching the operating conditions of a processing system which processes at least said contents in response to an operation of a predetermined operation element; and

switching the design of said display screen in response to the switching.

30. A recording medium according to Claim 29, said playback procedure further comprising the steps of:

selecting a corresponding list from a plurality of lists for setting the operating conditions of said processing system in response to the operation of said operation element; and

switching the operating conditions of said processing system which processes said contents in accordance with the selected list.

31. A playback apparatus for playing back contents by sequentially switching said contents in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback apparatus comprising:

display means for producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play list are

arranged so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence from the content which is currently being played back at least from a display of an operation element for instructing the starting of playback or from a display of an operation element for instructing the stopping of playback; and

switching means for switching the arrangement of the displays showing said contents in response to the switching of the playback of said contents.

32. A playback apparatus according to Claim 31, wherein a display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said arrangement.

33. A playback apparatus according to Claim 31, wherein a display showing said content is the name of said content.

34. A playback apparatus according to Claim 31, wherein said content is audio data.

35. A playback apparatus for playing back contents by sequentially switching said contents in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback apparatus comprising:

display forming means for forming a display showing a piece of content which is currently being played back in a predetermined area of a display section;

display means for producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said list are arranged so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence with respect to the display showing the content which is currently being played back; and

switching means for switching the arrangement of the display showing said content which is currently being played back and the display showing the contents of said play list.

36. A playback apparatus according to Claim 35, wherein the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said arrangement.

37. A playback apparatus according to Claim 35, wherein the display showing said content is the name of said content.

38. A playback apparatus for playing back contents in sequence in accordance with a play list in which said contents to be played back are recorded, said playback apparatus comprising:

display means for displaying a plurality of play lists;

playback means for, when the playback of one piece of content of one play list from among said plurality of play lists is terminated, playing back one piece of content of another play list; and

display means for displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

39. A playback apparatus according to Claim 38, further comprising:

first display means for producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play lists are arranged for each play list so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence from the content which is currently being played back at least from a display of an operation element for instructing the starting of playback or from a display of an operation element for instructing the stopping of playback; and

second display means for displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

40. A playback apparatus according to Claim 39,

wherein the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said corresponding arrangement.

41. A playback apparatus according to Claim 38, further comprising:

display forming means for forming a display showing the content which is currently being played back in a predetermined area of a display section;

display means for producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play lists are arranged for each play list so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence with respect to the display showing said content which is currently being played back; and

display means for displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

42. A playback apparatus according to Claim 41, wherein the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said arrangement.

43. A playback is according to Claim 38, wherein said

content is audio data, and the playback results of said continuous contents are mixed and output.

44. A playback method for playing back contents by switching said contents in sequence in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback method comprising the steps of:

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play list are arranged so that the contents become in sequence in a playback sequence from the content which is currently being played back at least from a display of an operation element for instructing the starting of playback or from a display of an operation element for instructing the stopping of playback; and

switching the arrangement of the displays showing said contents in response to the switching of the playback of said contents.

45. A playback method according to Claim 44, wherein the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said arrangement.

46. A playback method according to Claim 44, wherein the display showing the content is the name of said content.

47. A playback method according to Claim 44, wherein said content is audio data.

48. A playback method for playing back contents by switching said contents in sequence in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback method comprising the steps of:

forming a display showing the content which is currently being played back in a predetermined area of a display section;

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said list are arranged so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence with respect to the display showing the content which is currently being played back; and

switching the arrangement of the display showing said content which is currently being played back and the display showing the contents of said play list.

49. A playback method according to Claim 48, wherein the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said arrangement.

50. A playback method according to Claim 48, wherein the display showing said content is the name of said content.

51. A playback method for playing back contents in sequence in accordance with a play list in which said contents to be played back are recorded, said playback method comprising the steps of:

displaying a plurality of play lists;

when the playback of one piece of content of one play list from among said plurality of play lists is terminated, playing back one piece of content of another play list; and

displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

52. A playback method according to Claim 51, further comprising the steps of:

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play lists are arranged for each play list so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence from the content which is currently being played back at least from a display of an operation element for instructing the starting of playback or from a display of an operation element for instructing the stopping of playback; and

displaying at least the content which is currently

being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

53. A playback method according to Claim 52, wherein the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said corresponding arrangement.

54. A playback method according to Claim 51, further comprising the steps of:

forming a display showing the content which is currently being played back in a predetermined area of a display section;

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play list are arranged for each play list so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence with respect to the display showing the content which is currently being played back; and

displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

55. A playback method according to Claim 54, wherein

the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated is placed at the end of said corresponding arrangement.

56. A playback method according to Claim 51, wherein said content is audio data, and the playback results of said continuous contents are mixed and output.

57. A recording medium on which a playback processing procedure for playing back contents by switching said contents in sequence in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback procedure comprising the steps of:

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play list are arranged so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence from the content which is currently being played back at least from a display of an operation element for instructing the starting of playback or from a display of an operation element for instructing the stopping of playback; and

switching the arrangement of the displays showing said contents in response to the switching of the playback of said content.

58. A recording medium according to Claim 57, wherein said playback processing procedure places the display showing the content whose playback has been terminated at the end of said arrangement.

59. A recording medium on which a playback processing procedure for playing back contents in sequence by switching said contents in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback processing procedure comprising the steps of:

forming a display showing the content which is currently being played back in a predetermined area of a display section;

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play list are arranged so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence with respect to the display showing the content which is currently being played back; and

switching the arrangement of the display showing said content which is currently being played back and the display showing the contents of said play list in response to the switching of the playback of said content.

60. A recording medium according to Claim 59, wherein said playback processing procedure places the display

showing the content whose playback has been terminated at the end of said arrangement.

61. A recording medium on which a playback processing procedure is recorded for playing back contents in sequence in accordance with a play list in which the contents to be played back are recorded, said playback processing procedure comprising the steps of:

displaying a plurality of play lists;

when the playback of one piece of content of one play list from among said plurality of play lists is terminated, playing back one piece of content of another play list; and

displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

62. A recording medium according to Claim 61, said playback processing procedure comprising the steps of: producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play lists are arranged for each play list so that the contents become in sequence in a sequence in which playback is performed starting from the content which is currently being played back at least from a display of an operation element for instructing the starting of

playback or from a display of an operation element for instructing the stopping of playback; and

displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished from the other content.

63. A recording medium according to Claim 62, said playback processing procedure further comprising the step of placing the content whose playback has been terminated at the end of said corresponding arrangement.

64. A recording medium according to Claim 61, said processing procedure further comprising the steps of:

forming a display showing the content which is currently being played back in a predetermined area of a display section;

producing a display in such a way that the displays showing the contents of said play list are arranged so that the contents become continuous in sequence in a playback sequence with respect to the display showing the content which is currently being played back; and

displaying at least the content which is currently being played back and the content to be played back next in such a way that the contents can be mutually distinguished

